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ABSTRACT

This paper traces the history and development of Yupik, the first language for almost 14,000 Native Alaskans, and reports findings of the Bilingual/Bicultural Needs Assessment survey conducted in 1983. Yupik remains one of the strongest Native American languages, despite historical factors that have increased English usage among Native Alaskans. Increasingly, Yupik is associated only with past traditions. Concern for the viability of the language has given rise to Yupik revitalization efforts, including a renewed focus on bilingual education. Although it means different things to different people, the issue of bilingual education is closely linked to local autonomy in questions of land use, social services, and health care. The issue is often seen not just as one of educational policy, but as an all-encompassing social policy and, thus, has fallen victim to ambivalence and shifting priorities. The survey questioned Yupik and non-Yupik students, school staff, and "other important adults"--a total sample of 2,192 persons--about bilingual education needs and demands. Results revealed inter- and intracultural disagreement on the issue. Most students (54%) and other important adults (62%) wanted equal time for the two languages, but 64% of staff members wanted more English than Yupik. The report concludes that, while there was general support for bilingual education, educators and the surrounding community are split on the emphasis of course content. The report suggests that policies based on the belief that monolingualism is inevitable, could end as self-fulfilling prophesies. This paper contains 15 references. (TES)

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They Just Want Everything: Results of A Bilingual Education Needs Assessment in Southwestern Alaska

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The Language Situation

Southwestern Alaska is home to more than 17,000 Central Alaskan Yupik Eskimos, living in scattered and relatively isolated villages of one to several hundred residents, unconnected by roads. Subsistence fishing, hunting and gathering are significant to the economy, and vital to ethnic identity; cash sources are limited, but also essential. Despite an historic period of language suppression, and over a century of contact with monolingual English speakers (1), Central Alaskan Yupik (generally referred to as Yupik) remains the first language of close to 14,000 people (Krauss, 1980: 45). It is thus one of the strongest Native American languages extant.

The Yupik language is most viable throughout the Delta of the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers, which diverge from a point of close proximity about 320 km (200 miles) inland to flow into the Bering Sea, creating a wedge-shaped area of some 100,000 sq. km (40,000 sq. mi.) The city of Bethel, which was originally established as a Moravian missionary post in 1885, is the service center for the region, and now has a population of approximately 3800. From Bethel, goods

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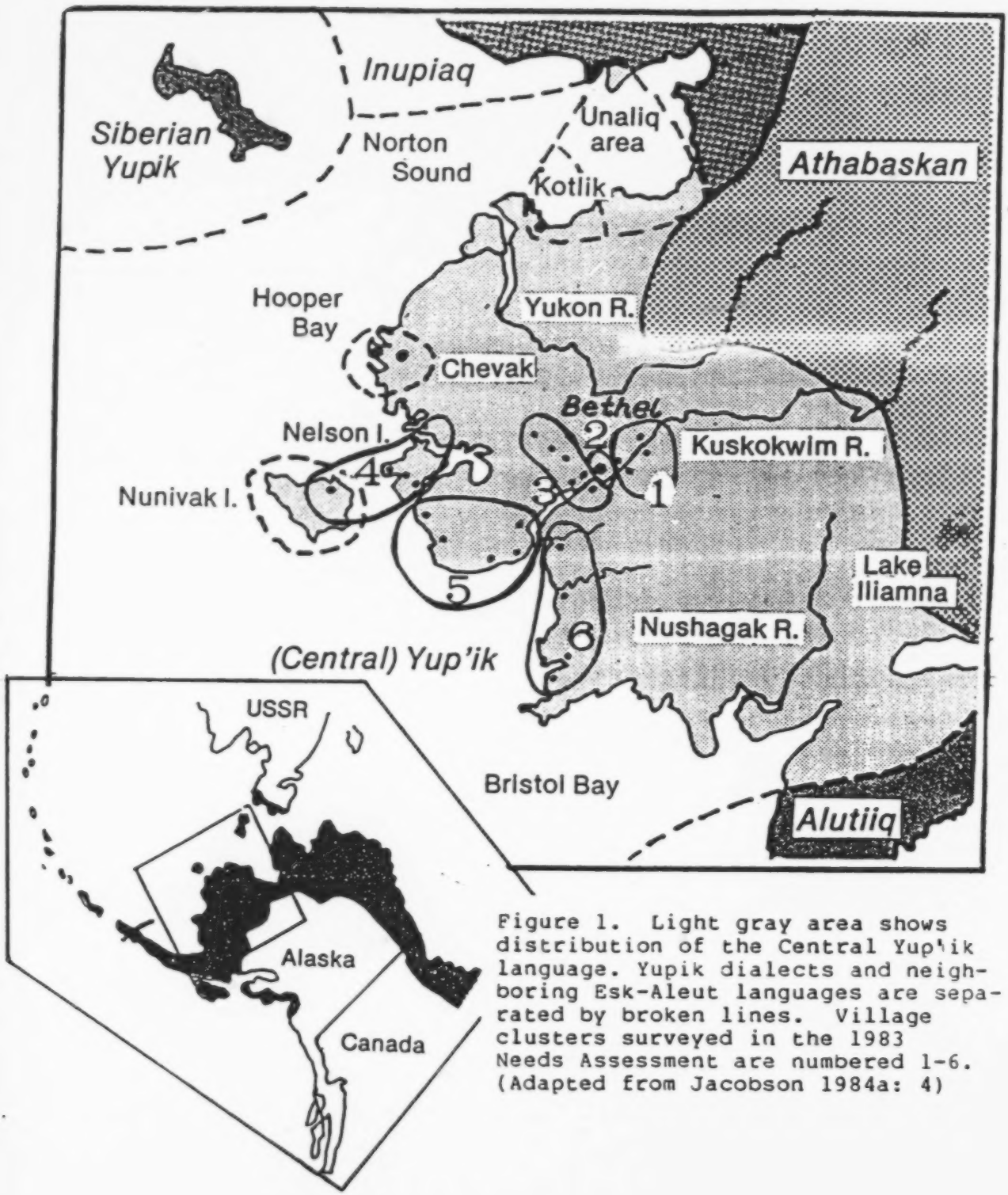

Figure 1. Light gray area shows distribution of the Central Yup'ik language. Yupik dialects and neighboring Esk-Aleut languages are separated by broken lines. Village clusters surveyed in the 1983 Needs Assessment are numbered 1-6. (Adapted from Jacobson 1984a: 4)

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are distributed to the villages, and medical, legal and educational programs are administered. Here, too, the relationship of the region's two languages, Yupik and English, is a topic of intense policy concern.

Despite its apparent general health, the Yupik language is not uniformly viable throughout the area, and its future in relation to English is uncertain. There is, to begin with, great local variation in language use. The reasons for this variation are several.

1. Language use, in many villages, correlates with economic history and relative degree of contact with Outsiders (Euro-Americans from the non-contiguous forty-eight United States). English tends to predominate, at the expense of Yupik, in villages where mining, commercial fishing, and (in one case) whaling activities have been historically important. Conversely, villages that are more remote and have fewer extractable resources tend to be more strongly Yupik-dominant.

2. Other historical factors are also significant. Near the turn of the century, severe measles and influenza epidemics caused population declines and orphaned many children. Missionary groups supported a number of these children in boarding schools, where they learned English and sometimes forgot Yupik. Tuberculosis was also a serious health problem through the 1950's, and many children spent extended

periods of time in tuberculosis sanatoriums outside of the Yupik-speaking area, returning as monolingual English speakers.

3. Strong individuals, whether Natives of a given village or Outsiders, have always had a considerable role in influencing local language use. Non-native clergy and educators who were either tolerant or intolerant of the Native language made significant impacts on the villages under their jurisdiction. The personal experiences of elders, Native school board members and other respected village residents are also influential. For example, in one village, a school board member who feels that a better knowledge of English would have enhanced his own education has convinced others that Yupik should not be taught in the schools; in another, one who attributes his economic and political success to fluent bilingualism has had the opposite influence.

4. There is a strong tradition of respect for village autonomy among the Yupik people. As a result, variation in customs is common and expected. Dialect variation corresponds with groups of closely related villages (ilakellriit), and between the villages within any such group there may also be variation in the degree to which Yupik or English is spoken.

5. Within a single village, too, there may be found individuals who are monolingual in Yupik, bilingual in English and Yupik, or monolingual in English. The situation Anthony Woodbury reported for the village of Chevak in 1981 (2) is similar to that of the most Yupik-dominant villages within the study area in 1988. In Chevak, with the exception of a few people who married in from predominantly English-speaking villages, everyone in the village at that time spoke Yupik. Most people born before 1945 spoke little English, and

> except among those born after around 1960, Central Yup'ik (3) is used almost exclusively between peers. The situation between members of different generations is more sociologically complex, with English occurring far more often. Impressionistically, one hears about as much Central Yup'ik as English from those born after 1960, although to be sure there are some ten-year-olds who choose to conduct nearly all of their affairs outside of school in Central Yup'ik, and some nineteen-year-olds who prefer to use English whenever possible. (1981: 3)

At the opposite extreme, in the most English-dominant of the villages, elderly people are still primary speakers of Yupik, and may have little or no English-speaking ability, but the middle generation is less fluent in Yupik and the children may have, at the very most, only passive understanding of the Native language.

6. Individual autonomy is respected. If grandparents, for example, prefer that their grandchildren speak Yupik, they may mildly criticize daughters or sons (the parents of these

children) who address them in English. If the parents continue to use English, however, their choice tends to prevail. By the same token, if children consistently respond in English when addressed in Yupik, they may be gently encouraged to respond in Yupik. If this is not effective, the children's choice is also respected. Consequently, within a single family, some children may speak Yupik and others only English. Because schools, media, and the burgeoning necessity of bureaucratic communications have increased the presence of English in the villages over time, it is often the younger children in a family, if any, who speak only English.

7. As a consequence of factors such as these, operating in various combinations, two neighboring villages may have very different language patterns: a community where the children are fluent in Yupik may neighbor one where most speak predominantly, or exclusively, in English.

These locally variant forces exist in combination with influences which widely pervade all of the villages. For at least the past decade, villages have had satellite television reception, and radio has been available much longer. While Bethel's public radio and television station produces some programs in Yupik, all other stations broadcast only in English. While monolingual Yupik elders may turn the sound off to watch only the video portions of

English-language broadcasts, English-language programs have strong appeal for middle-aged and young viewers.

Except in the context of intravillage meetings, where everyone is Yupik-speaking, English is also the language of public affairs, for it is the language of the dominant American society. Except for the earliest missionaries, who had little choice but to learn Yupik, and the occasional non-Yupik teacher's child raised exclusively in villages, virtually no non-Natives speak the language. In legal proceedings, medical interviews, and public meetings, translators try to bridge the communications gap between participants. Although many translators excel by virtue of years of practice, they have little or no formal training. In many cases, any bilingual person available at the moment may be called upon to translate. There is no Yupik language newspaper, and the great majority of signs, public notices and other print media are in English. Those which are in Yupik generally fail to reach the older monolinguals for whom they would be most useful, for these are the people least likely to be literate in the standard Yupik orthography.

In such a setting, the advantages of fluency in English become apparent. The schools, in particular, devote considerable resources towards developing English skills. The cultural advantages of Yupik fluency are frequently less apparent. Increasingly, Yupik is associated with the past,

with "tradition" and "elders," although when asked about their language, Yupik people universally express the desire for it to remain viable, and are saddened by its decline in some villages.

In sum, the ultimate fate of the Yupik language still hangs in the balance. Concern is increasingly expressed over the maintenance of the Native language, and there are a number of Native language revitalization efforts ongoing in the region at present. These include the programs of the Yupik Language Center and the Kuskokwim College (University of Alaska) to institute translator training, conduct workshops to standardize technical terminology in Yupik, teach Yupik as a Second Language (4), offer Yupik literacy and grammar courses, and generally keep the importance of Native language preservation in the public eye. The local television/radio station is committed to steadily increasing broadcasting in Yupik, and Native organizations frequently support projects to document traditions in the Native language.

A Focus on Bilingual Education

Much of the focus of language controversy, however, has centered on bilingual education. In order to understand the remainder of this discussion, it is necessary to briefly trace the history of Native language literacy, English-only

schooling and bilingual education in the Delta, and to provide some perspective in relation to national trends.

From about 1890 - 1910 several missionary groups (Russian Orthodox, Moravian and Roman Catholic) began printing liturgical materials in Yupik -- each using a separate orthography -- thus introducing Native language literacy on a limited basis (Krauss 1980: 20 - 1). After 1910, however, a rigid English-only policy was instituted by the first Commissioner of Education in Alaska, the Presbyterian missionary Sheldon Jackson. English became the only admissible language on federal property, including Alaskan schools. In an attempt to promote rapid assimilation, educators also encouraged the use of English in the home and community. It was not until 1970 that this trend was checked, with the establishment of the first bilingual education program in Alaska under the Federal Bilingual Education Act of 1970. (5)

Modern Alaskan bilingual education, in fact, began in four schools in the Central Yupik region. The Primary Eskimo Program (PEP), a transitional three-year program, rapidly expanded to seventeen schools after Alaskan state law mandated, in 1971, that every school with fifteen or more (later amended to eight or more) students whose dominant language was other than English must offer a bilingual-bicultural education program. This was defined as "an organized program of instruction in elementary or

secondary education which is designed for children of limited English-speaking ability, uses English, the child's primary language, or both as a means of instruction, allows children to progress effectively through the educational system, and which may include elements of the culture inherent in the language" (in Coon, 1979: 2). From its earliest inception, there existed a hidden but essential contradiction between those who supported bilingual education for Native language maintenance, and those who supported it as transitional to English (6). While both groups agreed that "bilingual education" should be established, the seeds of later confusion about its purpose were already planted, a point which becomes apparent in the Bilingual Needs Assessment.

In the American context, the PEP Program was a radical innovation, and might have lacked support if these tensions had been more obvious from the outset: more non-Natives were willing to support the Native language in the schools as a temporary compensatory measure, than were committed to its continuing presence at public expense (and at what was perceived to be the expense of English). In modified form, and in addition to more recently-developed materials, the PEP program continues to be used in some Southwestern Alaskan schools.

Over the years, bilingual programs have been expanded and numerous textbooks and other educational materials in

the Yupik language have been printed for elementary and secondary levels. Some are original works in Yupik; most are translations of English books, or translations of English texts written specifically for this purpose. (McGary 1979; Yup'ik Language Program 1985) As students graduate from these programs, the Yupik literacy rate increases, along with the potential for more widespread use of the written language in public settings.

However, because of the flexibility of the bilingual education law, the variety of options it makes available to local village schools, and the complex controversies surrounding language use which have now begun to surface, there are currently widely variant "bilingual" programs in Delta villages. Some are maintenance programs, designed to foster continued use of the language beyond the elementary years, and to promote "cultural heritage." Others are English as a second language (ESL) programs, which concentrate on bringing idiomatic, phonological and grammatical features of the local English into closer approximation to so-called Standard American English, and do not use the Native language at all. Some, like the original PEP Program, are transitional, introducing students to education in Yupik, and gradually substituting English for the Native language. A few offer restorationist courses in Yupik as a second language. In a single school, several types of curriculum may co-exist, together constituting "the

bilingual program." Students are assigned to one or another of these classes on the basis of their relative proficiency in English, or Lau category (from the "Lau remedies" issued by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare as a result of the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision in Lau vs. Nichols, 1974). After the first grade, the total time any given student spends in a Yupik language class rarely (and after the third grade nowhere) exceeds one hour per day, and may be as little as one and a half hours per week, although the school district recommends a minimum of half an hour a day through the eighth grade (about age 14).

Bilingual education is important as an expression of local control within the schools: the first language instructors are Yupik and the materials are locally produced. In contrast, other classroom teachers (including those who teach the ESL portion of the bilingual program) are generally non-Native and use texts produced for mainstream American schools. The issue of local control is a fundamental one, for here, as elsewhere in the Third and Fourth Worlds, increasing governmental restrictions on subsistence resource harvests and land use, and a proliferation of regulations pertaining to health care and social services, have contributed to a growing sense of powerlessness and frustration. Local control of various aspects of health and social service program administration,

game management, schools, and courts has become the dominant theme in area politics.

Many people in the Delta simply think that bilingual education is synonymous with "Yupik in the schools." As such, it is clearly a program to be supported in the interests of language preservation. In fact, however, as this brief description has shown, bilingual education has always meant different things to different people, a situation which fosters much confusion about what bilingual education programs are, and what they are supposed to be. Bilingual education may even mean different things to the same people, for it promises both improved skills in English, necessary for success in the dominant society's political and economic spheres, and the maintenance of Native language and culture, necessary for survival in and perpetuation of the ethnic community. Americans often look to the schools to solve social problems; here, where the schools are the major representatives of the English-speaking world in the villages, they are naturally expected to help students mediate between the two cultures.

Confusion also stems from the fact that a positive interpretation of bilingualism and biculturalism is at odds with the simultaneously promulgated notion that speakers of languages other than English are disadvantaged. The two promises of bilingual education to redress inequality (with its underlying suggestion that speaking a language other

than English is a handicap) and to promote a positive valuation on the local culture are apparent in the Alaska Administrative Code (quoted in Coon 1979: 20). According to the code, the purpose of bilingual education is to provide "equal educational opportunity" to children of limited English-speaking ability,

> through the establishment of bilingual/bicultural programs of education (which) will provide more effective use of both English and the student's language, foster more successful secondary and higher education careers, facilitate the obtaining of employment, tend to bring about an end to the depreciation of local cultural elements and values by the schools, stimulate better communication between the community and the schools in solving educational problems, effect a positive student self-image, allow genuine options for all students in choosing a way of life, and foster more harmonious relationships between the student's culture and the mainstream of society.

Thus, while bilingual education is superficially presented as a language policy, it is in fact intended to be a rather all-encompassing social policy. It is assumed that a change in institutional language use, by itself, will bring about widespread social change, and the ultimate creation of a population at ease in two cultural worlds. (7)

Considering the difficulty of achieving such goals, and the national ambivalence and factionalism affecting federal and state bilingual education policies, it is not surprising that Alaskan programs have developed under conditions of shifting priorities and institutional reorganization, and carried out within loosely defined program objectives.

Within the Delta, teachers, students, parents, principals and school board members all express strong opinions about bilingual education, exerting pressures on the educational policy-makers in several directions at once. In 1982-3, the Delta school district which administered all primary and secondary schools in twenty-three Yupik villages decided to conduct an extensive survey to clarify public opinions about bilingual/bicultural education and provide data which could be used in making language policy decisions.

Significance of The Bilingual/Bicultural Needs Assessment

> Speech communities that are in control of their own fates are rarely faced with either-or dilemmas with respect to dialect or standard in practice. Mastery of both ... is required by the role repertoire of modern school and out-of-school life. (Fishman 1982: 20)

While Yupik speech communities, true to Fishman's observation, find both English and Yupik to be necessary in their communicative repertoires, they continue to be subject to the "either-or" policies of school systems and other non-indigenous institutions. The Bilingual/Bicultural Needs Assessment (Lehrman 1983) was unusual in that it asked respondents to make specific choices weighting the importance of each language in relation to the other, the types of choices so rarely required in daily communications. Such mutually exclusive options seem natural to educational policymakers and administrators, whose task it is to

apportion different academic subjects to different daily time slots.

Some questions in the Needs Assessment asked for an evaluation of the relative importance of teaching either or both of the two languages in school. Other questions placed these responses in the context of peoples' feelings about the ultimate aspirations of students, and the cultural implications of English and Native language education. As might be predicted, the survey elicited such a variety of responses that the school superintendent threw up her hands in exasperation, saying "They just want everything!"

Indeed, so many hopes are pinned on bilingual education, and so many confusions exist about its nature and potential, that a simple enumeration of public opinions does little to simplify the task of policymakers. As a statistical analysis, the survey can not be used to direct educational programs. It does, however, reveal areas of intra- and intercultural disagreement which suggest the complexity of negotiating the demands of two worlds, in two languages.

Designing and Carrying Out the Survey

The questionnaire was drafted by Yupik and non-Yupik staff of the district's bilingual/bicultural department, and originally included several qualitative, open-ended questions. After it was reviewed and amended by higher level administrators, these questions were deleted because

of the concern for ease of tabulation. It ultimately consisted of seventeen multiple choice questions (8). The assessment was administered by department staff, who travelled to each village in the district. Written questionnaires were given to those who could read English well, but the questions were also asked orally, in English and/or Yupik. Interviewers remained present to answer questions, and to explain the differences between the types of programs with which the survey was concerned, an area of much confusion and misunderstanding.

Respondents included all junior and senior high school students (1190 students, approximately 13 - 18 years old), elementary and secondary school staff (135 Native Yupik associate teachers and instructional aides, and 202 certificated teachers and principals, about 93% of whom were non-Native), and about ten percent of the community at large (90 advisory school board members and 575 parents, virtually all Native), a total of 2192 people.

The survey was tabulated at the University of Alaska, Anchorage, and a number of compilations were prepared. Each village school received a graph of that village's responses. For the district administration, the compiler prepared a summary report of the eleven questions thought to be most helpful for planning purposes. Apparently, the original forms were eventually discarded, precluding retabulation

and, even more unfortunately, preventing consideration of the lengthy comments which many respondents made on the backs of their questionnaires. These supplementary responses demonstrated that many people found purely quantitative questions inadequate for the full expression of their opinions.

Another shortcoming of the summary was that it grouped respondents into three categories: students, certificated staff, and "other important adults." While this grouping partially offset the unavoidably large discrepancies in the sizes of the groups interviewed, it had a serious flaw. It virtually lumped all Yupik adults together, thereby obscuring differences in response by Native instructional staff, parents, and school board members. It may be that tabulators made the unwarranted assumption that Yupik respondents across the board would show relative consistency in their responses. A cursory review of the original responses (before the author knew that they would be discarded), however, suggested that school board members, who represent parents in making local policy recommendations, often held opinions more closely aligned with school staff than with the public they represented. It would have been illustrative to compare the responses of Yupik aides and associate teachers with those of village parents, on the one hand, and non-Yupik certificated teachers, on the other.

Another factor affecting interpretation of the results is that the survey combined responses of neighboring villages into "village clusters" (see Fig. 1). With its anomalous mixed Native/non-Native population and its more urban cultural configuration, Bethel rightly constituted a cluster of its own. The other clusters, however, did not take sociolinguistic features of the communities into consideration. They did not completely correspond with regional groups, in one case crossed a major dialect boundary (see Fig. 1, #4), and sometimes included both villages where Yupik remains a strong first language, and villages where English is the children's dominant language (particularly true within clusters #1, #4 and #6).

Despite these obvious shortcomings, however, the survey reveals some interesting facets of the controversy over bilingual education, and by extension, living in a bilingual speech community in America. Questions and general results are presented below; interesting variations within village clusters are also interpreted.

The following questions constituted the summary report:

1. What do you want your school's bilingual program to do? Choices: teach English as a second language; teach the Yup'ik language; teach both but more English than Yup'ik; teach both but more Yup'ik than English; teach equal amounts of English and Yup'ik

2. Children spend five hours a day in school. How much of this time would you like them to spend in studying English as a second language? Choices: no hours; one hour; two hours; three hours; four hours; five hours

3. Children spend five hours a day in school. How much of this time would you like them to spend in studying (sic) Yup'ik language instruction? Choices: 0 - 5 hours, as above

4. Children spend five hours a day in school. How much of this time would you like them to spend studying Yup'ik as a second language? Choices: 0 - 5 hours, as above

5. What do you think the children will do in the future? Choices: remain in the village after (high school) graduation; go on to college or trade school; go to college or trade school but return to a village; leave the village but remain in the area; leave the area completely

6. What do you want students to learn in Yup'ik classes? Choices: how to speak better Yup'ik; how to read Yup'ik; how to write Yup'ik; Yup'ik history and traditions; traditional arts and crafts; translation skills; knowing what it means to be Yup'ik (These answers were not mutually exclusive)

7. What do you want students to learn in English as a second language classes? Choices: how to speak good English; how to read English; how to write English; how to effectively communicate ideas; how to make a living outside

the village; how to read and write for college (Not mutually exclusive choices)

8. Are Yup'ik language, culture, traditional skills and values important? Choices: yes; no

9. Where should they (Yup'ik language, etc.) be taught? Choices: they should be taught only by the family; they should be taught by the school only; they should be taught by both the family and the school

10. What is more important in assisting children to meet their life's goals? Choices: becoming proficient in speaking, reading and writing English; becoming proficient in speaking, reading and writing Yup'ik; both are equally important in their lives.

11. Should courses in Yup'ik culture and language be required for graduation? Choices: yes; no

Results of the Survey

1. The great majority of certificated staff (64%) wanted more English than Yupik taught in the bilingual program. Another 12% wanted only English as a second language in the program, and most of the remainder (16%) wanted the languages equally represented. 54% of the students and 62% of other important adults, however, wanted equal time for the two languages. About 22% of each of these groups wanted more English than Yupik, but only 2-4% wanted only English as a second language. The option of having more Yupik than

English received almost no support from the certificated staff (less than 2%), but attracted about 16% of the Yupik students.

There is thus substantial agreement that both languages should be taught, but non-Yupiks tend to think the emphasis should be on English while Yupiks tend towards equal representation of the languages. This is one question which showed clear differences by ethnic group, and not much variation from one village cluster to another.

2. The question of how much time should be spent studying English as a second language elicited a wide variety of answers. Almost equal proportions of all groups (20 - 30%) wanted either 0 or 1 hour per day of ESL, but for each group some respondents wanted 2, 3, 4 and even 5 hours a day, with the proportion of responses generally decreasing as the hours increased. Fully 18% of the certificated staff, however, voted for four hours of ESL. From one village to another within each cluster, too, there were strong differences of opinion, sometimes among the students and sometimes among the certificated staff.

3. Except for Bethel, where 50 - 60% of all groups did not support any Yupik instruction in the schools at all, there was general consensus supporting an hour a day of Yupik. The noticeable lack of support for instruction in the Native language in Bethel corresponds to the presence of many non-speaking and non-Native students, the dominance of

English in the community as a whole, and the sense of greater social proximity to the rest of Alaska and the nation. In other village clusters, at least 20% and up to 44% of the students preferred two or three hours of Yupik instruction per day. Up to 28% of the Yupik adults in some clusters supported the two hour option, and 12 - 20% supported three hours. In stark contrast, few (8% or less) of the certificated teachers in most clusters voted for more than an hour and less than 2% voted for more than two. The highest percentage (18%) of teachers supporting the two hour option came from one village cluster (#3); the presence in this cluster of an influential member of the regional school board who actively supports Yupik language and cultural education has undoubtedly contributed to the high level of support for bilingual education among all groups in this cluster.

In reality, no matter how great the public opinion, it would be highly unlikely that the school system would offer more than one hour a day of Yupik. Other requirements, in the form of standard academic offerings, take precedence, and these are taught in English, because there are so few certificated teachers who speak Yupik, materials and texts are prepared for national use, and the school's role has always been as the agent of Euro-American culture.

4. Since the majority of the people polled speak Yupik as a first language, there was relatively little interest in

Yupik as a second language programs. In Bethel, where there are fewer fluent speakers, there was somewhat more interest. 44% of the students, 30% of certificated teachers, and 36% of other adults supported at least an hour of YSL.

5 and 10. Responses to the questions about what children will do in the future and which language(s) would be most important in allowing them to meet their life goals were particularly interesting. Few students (16%) expected to simply remain in their villages after high school graduation. Most expected to go to college or trade school (18%) or to go off to school and then return to the village (36%). The remainder expected to leave their villages but stay in the area. Very few of those outside of Bethel thought that they would leave the area entirely. In disturbing contrast, the teachers had much less confidence in their students' educational futures. In each village cluster, teachers were at least twice as likely as their students to think that the latter would remain in the villages and not seek higher education. In some clusters (#1, #3, #6) more than 40% of the students thought that they would go to college/trade school and return. Only 10 - 16% of their teachers shared this expectation. In spite of the more transient nature of Bethel's population in comparison to that of the villages, only one of the Bethel teachers thought students were likely to leave the area completely, as compared to 14% of the students who expected to do so.

Preliminary studies currently being conducted by the school district suggest that the students' projections may have been the more accurate. Of the 1988 graduates of village schools (not including Bethel), 36% have been accepted into or are seriously pursuing admission to college or vocational schools; a slightly smaller percentage will probably actually attend. A study of 1986 graduates (with a response rate of 34%) showed comparable results: 26.8% of the students had pursued college or vocational education. (Kuhns 1988)

These findings underscore the tensions that exist in curriculum planning. Except for bilingual education and cultural heritage classes, the curriculum is that of the standard American school. Some teachers would prefer a curriculum more applicable to village life, others feel that the schools are there "to introduce students to Euro-American culture, whether that is interesting or relevant to the students or not," (Jacobson 1984b: 37) and yet others seek to achieve a balance between the two extremes.

Despite the teachers' expectations that students would remain in the village or area after graduation, about 42% asserted that English will be more important than Yupik in meeting their life goals (question 10). The remaining 56% thought that both English and Yupik were equally important (two teachers thought that Yupik would be more important).

Consistent with their expectations of remaining in the area, 85% of the village students (and 44% of Bethel students) asserted that both languages would be equally important, with the remaining small percentages relatively equally split between English and Yupik as the most important. These results suggest that most students expect their society to continue to be bilingual and that they consider a knowledge of their language to be essential to success, as they define it. Many teachers, on the other hand, expect Yupik to be replaced by English over time, and/or devalue the social importance of speaking the Native language. Since the teachers ultimately have control of the classroom, their expectations may tend to be self-fulfilling.

6 and 7. There was considerable variation in the responses for different clusters on the question of what students should be learning in Yupik classes. In general, teachers and other adults placed more emphasis on literacy skills (75% or more in some clusters), and to a smaller degree on learning history and traditions, than they did on speaking, traditional arts, translation skills and Yupik identity. Less than half of the teachers thought that the latter two were important aspects of the bilingual program. Their interpretation of the bilingual program as essentially academic in nature is clear. Students placed proportionately more emphasis on literacy and Yupik arts and crafts, and, like their teachers, were less concerned with

translation and identity (about 30% voted for these two). Over 60% of the Yupik adults were concerned about translation skills; this suggests a concern with cross-generational and cross-cultural communication. Despite the Yupik ideal of community cohesiveness and decision-making by consensus, young adults may be less concerned with taking on the role of cross-cultural brokers than their elders, who are less bilingual and feel the need for adequate translation. Their expectation that the school exists to impart traditional academic knowledge, the attitude of the majority of the teachers, is also reflected in this response.

As one might predict, teachers were highly concerned about speaking, reading, writing and effective communication in English (percentages ranging from 70% to 94%) and less concerned about preparing students for college or making a living outside of the village (26 - 58%). Speaking better English was the students' highest priority, and they were generally more concerned (40 - 60%) with college preparation than the teachers were. Other adults supported all of the academic skills, and also emphasized college preparation (50 - 76%) more than either of the other groups. The parents, then, seemed most convinced that their children would attend college.

8 and 9. There was virtual unanimity (92 - 98%) among all groups in all clusters that Yupik language, culture and

traditional skills and values were important. 96% of Yupik adults, 88% of the students, and 86% of the certificated staff thought that they should be taught both at home and in the schools. The remaining teachers (14%) thought it was the family's reponsibility alone.

11. The final question on the survey was whether or not courses in Yupik language and culture should be required for graduation. 80% of the Yupik adults and 62% of the students thought that they should be. The teachers were divided: 52% in favor and 48% against. Thus, if students are becoming less convinced of the importance of Yupik in the schools it may be a reflection of their teachers' priorities; certainly it is not the result of any general trend among their parents.

Conclusions

The picture which emerges is one of general support for both Yupik language and English as a second language education, mixed opinions about what the bilingual programs should actually emphasize, and sometimes clashing visions of the future of the Delta's children and of their Native language.

What does this tell us about bilingualism in America? The status of Yupik Eskimos is not that of an immigrant group, and they pose no perceived economic threat to the majority. Currently, bilingualism is the ordinary and expected

language situation in the Delta; no unwilling English-speaking population rebels against ballots printed in Yupik, or bilingual public announcements. Still, there is an increasing sense that Yupik people must be prepared to evolve into a monolingual English society. As one teacher put it:

> The future of the Yup'ik language is questionable. In twenty years the Yup'ik Eskimo language may be English. Educators of both languages must realize that the monetary system of the United States and the specific area of Bethel is based on the English language. Yup'ik students must be better prepared to deal with that.

What we need to learn from the Yupik situation is that policies based on the anticipation -- whether it is in the form of fear or hope -- that monolingualism may prevail become self-fulfilling prophecies. If speakers begin to doubt that their language will endure, their commitment to maintaining (or even restoring) the first language may be eclipsed by their concern for improving second language skills. While young Yupik people, as evidenced by the survey, are still committed to language maintenance, they seem to be less convinced than their elders of the language's critical tie to ethnicity, its importance for bridging the cross-cultural gap, and its mandatory presence in the schools. Is this an inevitable trend, the fate of all minority languages in America? Or does it simply represent the influence of teachers and other non-Natives who have become primarily concerned with teaching English

not only because it is a necessary language, but because they believe the Native language may die and people must be "prepared" for that eventuality?

If people assume that bilingualism will continue as the language situation into the indefinite future, they will more naturally reinforce activities which keep the language vital and expressive. Native language education, as one example, would be considered normal and desirable. But an insidious conviction that the Native language is tied to economic and social inequality, and that efforts towards equality must take the form of increasing proficiency in the dominant language (at the ultimate and implicit expense of the indigenous one) will surely destroy speakers' confidence that their language will survive.

The history of American bilingual education began in confusion and dissension -- both covert and overt -- and continues in this vein. If the Needs Assessment indicates that minorities such as the Yupik Eskimos "just want everything" (that is, proficiency in two languages and ease in two cultures) the question remains: How much will they get, and how will the decision be made? It is not enough to say that almost everyone supports bilingual education. To students and parents, the term seems to suggest at least equal representation of Yupik and English in the schools. To the teachers and administrators, it suggests an emphasis on English. In the end, it is the latter whose daily decisions

determine language use in the schools; the day of local control of educational language policy is not yet at hand.

NOTES

(1) Yupik incorporated some 190 loan words from Russian (Jacobson, 1984a) prior to the American purchase of Alaska in 1867; the Russian influence did not diminish the vitality of the Native language.

(2) The village of Chevak is outside of the boundaries of the school district which conducted the survey discussed here. More recent observations suggest that there are now an increasing number of Chevak children who enter school speaking only English.

(3) Note that, when spelled in the standardized orthography, Yupik has an apostrophe indicating gemination of the /p/ (Yup'ik). Both spellings are in common usage in English sources.

(4) The "Total Physical Response" method of teaching Yupik as a second language, an interactive technique which is replacing grammar-based language pedagogy for beginning students, is gaining in popularity. This has increased the number of non-Natives attempting to learn the language. Kuskokwim College instructor Cecilia Martz also reports plans to use this method to teach Native children who do not speak Yupik, involving their parents in the program, as well (Martz 1988). The Maori model of "language nests" (Flaras 1983; Sharples 1985) has inspired this plan. For some years, too, there has been interest in developing an intensive Yupik language immersion program which would combine language learning with summer subsistence activities. To date, these programs have yet to be instituted.

(5) This program was developed under the aegis of the Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, where linguistic research on Alaska Native languages has been ongoing since 1960. By 1970, a consistent Yupik orthography had been developed, a grammar was being written, and a number of Native speakers were becoming literate. The latter became the first Yupik bilingual education teachers, and also produced the first written materials for the program.

(6) This situation of conflict over the goals of bilingual education was widespread in the late 1960's and early 1970's. The political climate in the United States was supportive of minority rights, but there were inevitable tensions between the proponents of maintenance and transitional education at the two extremes of bilingual educational philosophy. Over the years, a variety of program types emerged along a continuum ranging from strictly compensatory, transitional approaches to fully bilingual, pluralistic ones (c.f. Blanco, 1977). Now, however, there is less governmental support for all types of bilingual education, and there is a movement to make English the official language of the country (for a good discussion of the political implications of this movement, see Judd 1987). The fear of minority political power and political divisiveness, a large ingrediant in the U.S. English movement, is largely a fear of immigrant groups, particularly Hispanics. In addition to the arguments which can be set against such paranoid reactions, it is important to realize that language policies based on immigrant groups also have devastating impacts on indigenous American minorities. These groups suffer the consequences of all policies aimed at "minorities," which may consequently be difficult to tailor to local needs, or simply inapplicable.

(7) Note that the incorporation of cultural features in so-called bilingual/bicultural education is optional. Programs may include "elements of the culture which are inherent in the language," a phrase which even linguists since the days of Sapir and Whorf would have trouble applying to program development.

(8) The author, as a member of the department, contributed to the design of the questionnaire and helped to administer the survey.

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